

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

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How to Protect Food During and After a Power Failure

If the electricity has been off for more than a few hours...

- Keep refrigerators and freezers closed. Generally, safe temperatures will be maintained for four hours in the refrigerator and for 24 hours or more in a freezer.
- If possible, use dry ice to help maintain safe temperatures. Dry ice suppliers can be found in the Yellow Pages. To keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer below freezing temperatures for three to four days, you will need 25 pound of dry ice. If dry ice is used, handle with care and use gloves.
- Thawed food can usually be eaten if it is still "refrigerator cold."
- If food appears spoiled, has an unusual odor, color or texture, or you suspect it reached temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours, throw it out.

Once Power is Restored . . .

- If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for two hours or more.

If food was affected by storm water...

- Food containers with screw caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (soda bottles), twist caps, flip tops, snap-open, and home canned foods should be discarded if they have come into contact with flood water.
- If necessary, undamaged, commercially canned foods can be salvaged by homeowners. The can labels must be removed and the cans thoroughly washed and disinfected with a solution consisting of one cup of bleach in 5 gallons of water.
- Discard any food that may have come into contact with contaminated flood water and is not in a waterproof container.

As a general rule, residents who have any doubts about whether food is safe to eat are advised to discard it rather than risk illness.

Inquiries regarding the protection of food can be directed to the Bureau of Public Health Protection: 852-5999 or 852-5873.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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